Argus Playgroup
Day Care of Children

Argus Centre
Goslawdales
Selkirk
TD7 4EP

Telephone: 07309 721 787

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
27 August 2026

Service provided by:
Argus Playgroup

Service provider number:
SP2005007582

Service no:
CS2003009208

About the service

Argus Playgroup is registered to provide a daycare service to a maximum of 24 children aged two years to those not yet attending primary school at any one time.

Argus Playgroup works in partnership with Scottish Borders Council to provide care and learning for children. The service is based within the Argus Centre, a standalone community building in Selkirk. Children had access to a spacious playroom, a dedicated dining area, a smaller room used for physical play and group activities, and an outdoor play area that supported learning and play experiences.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 25 August 2026 between 8:30 and 15:30 and 26 August 2026 between 09:00 and 14:00. Feedback was shared with the service on 27 August 2026. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spent time with children using the service
- received feedback from 15 families of children who attend the service
- spoke with staff and the management team
- spoke with six families in person
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment.
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe; the physical environment is well maintained and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

Key messages

- Children were happy, confident and well supported through nurturing, responsive relationships.
- Families valued the service and felt welcomed, informed and involved in their children's experiences.
- A positive and reflective culture supported continuous improvement and positive outcomes for children.
- Children benefited from engaging play and learning experiences that promoted confidence, creativity and independence.
- The service had strengthened approaches to observing and recording children's learning and should now build on this by further developing how next steps and progress are identified and evaluated.
- Plans to develop free-flow access to outdoor play will further enrich children's learning, exploration and choice.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

Leadership	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

Leadership 4 - Good

Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

A positive and reflective culture was evident throughout the inspection. Staff and management were receptive to feedback and demonstrated a commitment to the service's ongoing development and future priorities. This supported continuous improvement and positive outcomes for children and families.

The service's vision and values had been developed with staff and families and were evident in practice. This provided a shared sense of purpose and supported positive relationships. Families described staff as attentive, informative, approachable and easy to talk to. One parent shared, "They make you feel at ease and make you feel like your child is the most important person to them."

Effective communication helped families feel informed and involved. Additional opportunities to gather feedback, such as questionnaires and suggestion box, would build on this strong partnership and further demonstrate how children and families influence service development and improvement.

Quality assurance processes, including audits, observations and professional review meetings, helped identify areas for development and drive positive change. We discussed strengthening monitoring arrangements by recording feedback to staff and tracking actions to better demonstrate progress and impact.

Self-evaluation findings were beginning to be used effectively to inform improvements. Changes to lunchtime experiences promoted children's independence, helping them develop more confidence, responsibility and life skills.

Accidents and incidents were managed appropriately to support children's health, safety and wellbeing. Records were completed accurately and shared with families. Further opportunities were identified to audit records routinely to identify patterns, reduce risks and enhance children's safety.

Medication procedures supported children's health and wellbeing, with records in place. To further strengthen practice, medication information should be reviewed with families at least every three months to ensure records remain accurate and up to date. Greater consistency across medication records is needed, particularly where children have more than one medication form. Clear links between records, including information about symptoms, support measures and required actions, would promote a shared understanding of children's needs and support safe, responsive care (see Area for Improvement 1).

While there was evidence that learning from training was influencing practice, approaches to evaluating and recording the impact of professional learning were not yet fully embedded. Strengthening this area would help demonstrate how training was improving outcomes for children.

Detailed policies, comprehensive risk assessments, effective signposting and clear procedures supported safe practice and helped ensure staff understood their responsibilities. As a result, children's safety and wellbeing were promoted and regulatory requirements were met.

Staff were developing leadership skills through responsibility for specific areas of the environment. They took ownership of reviewing, enhancing and monitoring these spaces, using observations and discussion to identify improvements. This helped build confidence, accountability and a shared responsibility for continuous improvement across the service.

The service had plans to further develop leadership roles, creating additional opportunities for staff to lead change and improve outcomes for children. Continued visits to other services would further support this by encouraging professional reflection, shared learning and the development of new ideas.

Staff were recruited safely and spoke positively about the support they received from management and colleagues. New staff particularly valued the guidance provided by the team and felt confident seeking advice when required. We discussed the potential benefits of using the National Induction Resource to further enhance induction arrangements and support consistency of practice.

Professional review and development meetings took place annually, with staff setting goals to support their ongoing learning and development. The setting had developed new paperwork to support more regular appraisals going forward. This will help strengthen professional reflection, monitor progress and identify opportunities for continued development.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's health, safety and wellbeing, the provider should strengthen oversight of medication records by ensuring three-monthly reviews are completed with families and that any changes are accurately reflected across all relevant documentation. This should include clear information about symptoms, support measures and actions to be taken. This will help ensure medication information remains current, clear and supports safe practice.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I experience high-quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources' (HSCS 4.27).

Children play and learn 4 - Good

Playing, learning and developing

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Children were engaged in play throughout the service and enjoyed positive interactions with peers and staff. They appeared happy, settled and confident in their environment. Staff promoted independence by encouraging children to do things for themselves, such as selecting and managing their own snack. As a result, children were developing confidence and self-help skills.

Children were developing positive peer relationships and interacted well with one another. Older children supported younger children during routines and play experiences, promoting kindness, cooperation and responsibility.

Staff provided a balance of planned and spontaneous experiences that supported learning through play. The pace of the day reflected children's interests and choices. There was scope to further enhance outdoor play opportunities through improvements to the outdoor space and increased child-led access. The service recognised this and was exploring options within the constraints of the building design.

Staff were attuned to children's interests and supported opportunities for managed risk. For example, children confidently used balancing boards and assessed risks within their play. As a result, children were developing confidence, resilience and problem-solving skills.

Children demonstrated confidence and independence as they accessed resources and sustained involvement in play experiences. We observed children exploring the mud kitchen, investigating water play and engaging in imaginative play experiences, supporting creativity, curiosity and enjoyment.

Staff used effective questioning, commentary and encouragement to extend children's thinking and learning. Literacy and numeracy were meaningfully embedded throughout play and daily routines, supporting communication and early mathematical skills.

The service had recently reviewed planning approaches, moving from digital books to paper-based formats that were more accessible for children, families and staff. Improvements had been made in how observations and next steps were recorded and used to support children's learning and development an area for improvement was made at the previous inspection to improve approaches to planning for and tracking children's progress.
(See section 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection' of this report). Whilst the service have made progress within this area for improvement, we have reworded this to reflect additional areas of improvement identified at this inspection (See Area for Improvement 1).

We discussed opportunities to strengthen planning by clearly identifying significant learning, next steps and progression over time. Further embedding children's voice, reflections and learning intentions would help ensure planning remained meaningful and responsive to individual interests and needs.

Learning journals were shared with families each term, supporting them to celebrate achievements and discuss learning at home. We suggested gathering more information about children's interests and involving children and families in identifying next steps to further strengthen partnership working and support continuity of learning.

Families told us their children's confidence had improved significantly and spoke positively about the range of experiences available. They felt staff knew children well, followed their interests and kept them informed about their development and achievements. One parent shared, "I love seeing how they are growing and progressing and receiving their learning journals home each term. It really shows how much the staff know and understand each child and how much care and thought goes into supporting their individual development."

A "Wow Wall" encouraged families to share achievements from home. This helped staff recognise and celebrate children's learning across different environments and supported connections between home and the setting.

The service tracked and monitored children's progress each term, using this information to identify where

support and challenge were needed. Continuing to strengthen how this information informs planning and learning experiences will help demonstrate children's progress and the positive impact of support over time.

Areas for improvement

1. To improve outcomes for children, the provider should ensure that observations of children's learning are recorded, evaluated, and used to identify appropriate next steps. This will help track progress, recognise achievements, and support children's ongoing learning and development.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I am supported to achieve my potential in my education and employment if this is right for me' (HSCS 1.27)

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Children appeared happy, settled and confident within the playgroup. Staff were kind, caring and responsive in their approach. They positioned themselves at children's level, helping children feel safe, secure and valued. Meaningful praise recognised children's achievements and helped build their confidence. Staff responded sensitively to children's cues and supported those new to the setting to develop trusting relationships and feel included.

Children transitioning into the playgroup were supported through carefully planned arrangements tailored to their individual needs. Staff also supported children well throughout daily routines and transitions. Their nurturing interactions, consistent commentary and reassurance helped children feel secure and supported. To build on this, further development of emotional literacy resources and planned opportunities to explore emotions would help children develop a greater understanding of their feelings and how to express them.

Staff knew children well and demonstrated a good understanding of their individual needs, preferences and what was important to them. Information was shared appropriately among staff to ensure consistent support.

Personal plans had recently been reviewed and a new streamlined format introduced. This provided a clearer approach to reflecting on children's personalities, interests and learning styles. Parents were involved in reviewing and contributing to their child's personal plan. One parent told us, "Care plans are updated regularly. These are available at any time for parents and carers to look at." This demonstrated that families were kept informed and involved in planning for their child's care and support.

Building on this person-centred approach, there was scope to further strengthen children's participation in the setting. Increasing opportunities for children to make choices, share their views and contribute to decisions about play experiences and the learning environment would help ensure they feel valued, included and actively involved.

Children's privacy and dignity were respected, with personal care delivered in a warm, sensitive and

nurturing manner. Developing positive, trusting relationships was a clear strength of the service. Parents told us, "I feel they really know each child in their care," while another added, "I know they were in the company of adults who have their best interests at heart." As a result, children's wellbeing, confidence and sense of security were promoted.

During mealtimes, staff supervised and supported children effectively. They sat alongside children, promoting conversation and language development while creating a calm and enjoyable experience. Families spoke positively about meals provided within the service, saying, "It's lovely to know they are being offered nutritious food and are encouraged to try different things in such a positive and enjoyable way."

All families had opportunities to be involved in the committee, supporting events, contributing to meetings and helping to shape the service. Recently, the committee worked closely with families and staff to raise funds for a new, higher outdoor fence. This enhanced children's safety and security and further supported access to outdoor play and learning experiences.

Relationships with families were warm, respectful and meaningful. Staff worked hard to create a welcoming and inclusive environment. Parents spoke positively about their relationships with staff and the quality of communication they received. One parent commented, "Argus feels like one big family, and we always feel welcomed and supported," while another said, "Argus offers something special and unique."

Staff embraced opportunities to engage families through stay-and-play sessions, ceilidhs and seasonal events. These opportunities helped families feel involved in their child's learning and development and contributed positively to outcomes for children.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

Learning stories should be used to track children's learning. Observations and next steps should be used to further develop children's learning and development.

Personal plans should be developed to show the strategies in place to support children during their time at the service.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16:
Standard 3: Health and wellbeing
Standard 6: Support and development.

This area for improvement was made on 27 March 2018.

Action taken since then

We found that personal plans had been developed for children and contained information to support their individual care and wellbeing needs during their time at the service. Plans outlined the strategies and approaches used by staff to support children and were reviewed with families to ensure information remained relevant and up to date. As a result, staff were better informed about children's individual needs and preferences, helping to promote consistency of care and positive outcomes. Therefore, this part of the Area for Improvement has been met.

We found that learning stories were in place for children; however, these were not yet being used effectively to track and support children's learning over time. Observations and identified next steps were not consistently linked to children's progress, making it difficult to demonstrate how learning and development were being planned for and extended. The service had visited other settings and identified approaches to strengthen the recording and monitoring of next steps going forward. While this demonstrated a commitment to improvement, further work is required to ensure learning stories effectively track progress and support children's learning and development. The service have made progress within this area for improvement; we have reworded this area for improvement to reflect additional areas needing developed and identified at this inspection (See Area for Improvement 1, Play and learning).

This Area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

Staff should undertake training to improve outcomes for children and develop leadership roles in order to drive forward improvements.
Staff should also increase their knowledge and use of best practice documents.
Standard 13: Confidence in Staff
Standard 14: Well-managed service.

This area for improvement was made on 27 March 2018.

Action taken since then

Staff had undertaken training and developed leadership responsibilities to support continuous improvement. They took ownership of reviewing and auditing play spaces, identifying strengths and areas for development. Plans were in place to further strengthen leadership through champion roles. As a result, children benefited from an environment that continued to evolve in response to their needs and interests.

Professional reading records demonstrated that staff had increased their knowledge of best practice guidance. Staff had also used Quality Improvement Framework questions to support reflection and identify areas for improvement. The service should now build on this by continuing to record how professional learning and self-evaluation inform practice changes and improve outcomes for children.

This Area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

Staff practice should be formally monitored. Supervision sessions should be used to discuss staff practice and identifying any training needs.
National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16:

Standard 13: Confidence in Staff
Standard 14: Well-managed service

This area for improvement was made on 27 March 2018.

Action taken since then

Staff practice is now formally monitored through playroom observations. These provide opportunities to review and reflect on practice, recognise strengths, and identify any actions required to support continuous improvement.

Staff maintain individual training records, and it is evident that playroom observations, professional reviews, and training opportunities are all taking place. During discussion, we highlighted the importance of making clearer links within training records to demonstrate the rationale for training undertaken and the impact this has had on practice. This would further strengthen the monitoring of professional development and support evaluation of how learning is improving outcomes for children.

Overall, we found positive evidence that efforts have been made to ensure mandatory training remains up to date and that staff development is actively monitored. As a result, staff are supported to enhance their knowledge and skills, strengthening the quality of care and learning provided and contributing to improved outcomes for children.

This Area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To improve outcomes for children the service should implement an effective quality assurance system.
National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16:
Standard 14: Well-managed service.

This area for improvement was made on 27 March 2018.

Action taken since then

The service has implemented a quality assurance calendar to support continuous improvement and promote positive outcomes for children. We found evidence of systematic monitoring across a range of areas, including PVG records, staff inductions, appraisals, and professional development. There was also evidence of regular oversight of health and safety requirements, including fire drills, safety checks, and maintenance monitoring.

These quality assurance activities supported a culture of reflective practice and continuous improvement by ensuring key areas of the service are regularly reviewed and evaluated. As a result, the service is better able to monitor performance, maintain compliance, identify areas for development, and support ongoing progress. This helps to ensure that children benefit from a safe, well-managed, and continuously improving service.

This Area for improvement has been met.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.scot.

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good

Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good

Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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